

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to consider joining these caucuses as we start the 118th Congress.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING STORM DAMAGE ACROSS ALABAMA'S SEVENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the storm damage impacting Alabama's Seventh Congressional District following the devastating tornadoes that struck our State earlier this month.

On January 12, severe storms, including multiple tornadoes, tore through the Southeast, ravaging communities in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and destroying over 16,000 homes. In my district alone, 6,000 properties sustained damage, many to the point of irreversible repair.

Across Alabama's Black Belt, rural communities that were still recovering from financial ruin of COVID-19 were once again devastated.

Hale County, with less than 15,000 residents, lost over 92 homes with an estimated \$2 million worth of damage. Greene County and Sumter County, also in my district, sustained damage.

Just outside of my district, in Autauga County, seven precious lives were lost that day. In my beloved hometown of Selma, Alabama, an EF-3 tornado tore through the town center, leveling homes, businesses, churches, and community centers in the Queen City.

I spent much of last week in Selma, boots on the ground, to survey the damage and to assist with the recovery effort. I will never ever forget the scene as I entered Selma that evening. It was pitch black as I crossed the bridge; no lights, just street after street of complete devastation.

The following morning, I was joined by Governor Ivey, Senator BRITT, Selma Mayor James Perkins, and State and local officials to tour the wreckage. My heart broke to see the depth of destruction in the light; trees uprooted from the ground, homes destroyed, lives destroyed.

It is not lost on me that this devastation struck our community on MLK weekend. But despite the debris and the horrific scenes that we saw, I did see a vision of what Dr. King meant by a beloved community. I saw neighbor helping neighbor and community members lending a hand to take care of the place that we call home.

I am thankful that President Biden heard our cries and expedited a major disaster declaration for the State of Alabama. This designation will provide critical Federal resources.

I am endlessly grateful to our partners at FEMA who are on the ground right now helping my constituents. Today, the Alabama congressional delegation is sending a letter to President

Biden requesting an increase in disaster assistance to Alabama, increasing the Federal share to 100 percent of the total eligible costs. We need this. We need this desperately.

I also thank the many mayors and residents of surrounding communities who offered a helping hand. We are indeed resilient people in Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, and nothing about that will change. Out of this destruction, I know that we have a unique opportunity to reimagine Selma and surrounding areas and to build back better and stronger than before.

We will do all we can, working together at all levels of government to bring every resource at our disposal to those who have been affected.

This evening, at 6:30 Central Time, I will be hosting a live telephone town-hall about disaster assistance to answer questions, and for my constituents to hear directly from FEMA and the Alabama EMA on disaster assistance.

I am asking my colleagues to keep Alabama's Seventh Congressional District and all of Alabama that was affected in your thoughts and prayers as we recover and rebuild. But for the grace of God go all of us.

We do need to make sure that our Federal resources are adequate to help those who have been impacted by disasters. We are, indeed, Selma Strong.

#### COMBATING CRIME IN NATION'S CAPITAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CLYDE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, right here in our Nation's Capital, crime continues to soar at an alarming rate. Yet, the D.C. Council is determined to advance a severely misguided bill to reduce penalties for violent criminal offenses.

In fact, some of the very crimes that the D.C. Council included in their radical legislation are on the rise. For example, last year, robberies were up, vehicle theft increased by 8 percent, and carjackings skyrocketed by 14 percent. Yet, the D.C. Council is fighting to reduce—yes, reduce—penalties for these offenses. You just can't make this stuff up.

Now, to her credit, D.C. Mayor Bowser opposes this dangerous effort, correctly claiming: "This bill does not make us safer."

For once, I agree with Mayor Bowser because combating crime and protecting citizens is not a conservative issue, it is a commonsense issue; it is an American issue.

In the face of D.C.'s failed leadership, Congress must take immediate action to prevent this disastrous bill from emboldening criminals and threatening the safety of residents and visitors.

In the coming weeks, I will introduce a joint resolution of disapproval to stop this insanity in its tracks. I look

forward to leading this fight, and I urge all of my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, to join me so we can ensure that no American faces fear and violence in our Nation's Capital.

#### DEFENSE OF AMERICANS' SECOND AMENDMENT FREEDOMS

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in the defense of Americans' Second Amendment freedoms.

The Biden administration is moving forward with yet another gun-grabbing tactic in order to register and ban millions of firearms, moving one step closer to the left's ultimate goal of disarming our Nation and dismantling our Second Amendment freedoms.

Earlier this month, the ATF finalized an unconstitutional rule pertaining to firearms with stabilizing braces. Under the ATF's new rule, any pistol-braced firearm would be considered an illegal short-barreled rifle, making these guns subject to the draconian regulations under the National Firearms Act of 1934.

Let me be clear: Unelected, anti-gun bureaucrats at the ATF do not have the authority to make laws. That authority rests right here in Congress.

Congress cannot continue turning a blind eye to the Biden administration's weaponization of the National Firearms Act and ongoing assault on Americans' Second Amendment freedoms. The time to act is now, and I am proud to lead this fight.

Next week, I will re-introduce the Stop Harassing Owners of Rifles Today Act, or the SHORT Act, to repeal elements of the National Firearms Act, thereby prohibiting the ATF from registering and banning pistols with stabilizing braces.

Additionally, as soon as the ATF's unlawful rule is published to the Federal Register, I will introduce a Resolution of Disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to override the Biden administration's unlawful overreach.

I have always done my utmost in the defense of our constitutional right to keep and bear arms. It is now time, now that the House is under the Republican majority, to go on offense.

Madam Speaker, I want gun owners to hear me loud and clear: We are fighting for you and your Second Amendment freedoms, and we will never give up.

#### LAWLESSNESS AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER

Mr. CLYDE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the lawlessness happening at our southern border.

To no one's surprise, President Biden attempted to conceal the ongoing chaos, chaos created by his disastrous policies at the southern border, by releasing the latest CBP report on a Friday night news dump. But these tactics can't hide the truth.

Last month, over a quarter of a million, over 251,000 illegal aliens were apprehended at the southern border, making December the highest monthly total on record.

More than a quarter of a million in a single month. If that doesn't pressure